(b) and (c) 95 applications were rejected and 18 were accepted. No application is pending.

The Voluntary Retirement Scheme was introduced primarily with the objective of reducing staff for the purpose of pruning cost and achieving higher productivity. The criteria for acceptance of applications for voluntary retirement was, therefore, based essentially on surrender of posts. Where the concerned Departments were not in a position to surrender the posts, the cases were rejected.

(d) and (e) In 1991, with a view to bringing parity with the Rules in Central Government and other Public Sector Undertakings, the qualifying service for voluntary retirement for Officers/Staff in Air India was reduced to 20 years from 25 years.

Expansion of operational network of IA in Assam

3894. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any decision of Government to expand the operational network of Indian Airlines in Assam ; and

(b) what is the valid reason for not operating any flights to Lilabari airport of Assam for the last many years ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (b) Vayudoot is proposing to extend its operations in the North East, under which Lilabari airport would also be covered.

Expansion and growth of Guwahati Airport

3895. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Calcutta Airport is the main hindrance for the expansion and growth of Guwahati airport ;

(b) by when the Guwahati airport will be completed as growth centre and start operations by itself ; and

(c) whether there is any undue interference from Calcutta airport into the affairs and functioning of the Guwahati airport ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (c) No, Sir.

(b) Guwahati airport is an all weather operational airport. It is being upgraded as Model Airport. The following works are in progress :—

(i) The Terminal Building is being expanded and modified at an estimated cost of Rs. 12.45 crores to cater to 750 arriving and departing passengers. The airport handles 35 flights per week.

(ii) Apron is being extended at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.8 crores.

(iii) Airport Surveillance Radar and Monopulse Secondary Surveillance Radar are being installed at a cost of Rs. 28.15 crores.

(iv) Ground Lighting facilities are being improved at a cost of Rs. 55 lakhs.

These are expected to be completed by December, 1995.

Revival Schemes for Hotel Ashok Brahmaputra, Guwahati

3896. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hotel Ashok Brahmaputra at Guwahati is in the red and is a losing concern ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government propose to dispose of this prestigious Hotel ; and

(c) if not, what are the revival schemes undertaken by Government to make the Hotel a profit making unit ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The steps being envisaged by ITDC management to make the Hotel a profit making unit include aggressive marketing efforts, development of human resource by imparting training at all levels, introduction of special tariff/packages, operational cost reduction, etc.

Proposal to Scrap Expenditure tax on Hotels

3897. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Tourism has proposed to the Ministry of Finance to scrap expenditure tax on all Hotels, as part of the package of incentives to the tourism industry ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether the Ministry of Finance has accepted the proposal and move to cut expenditure tax on hotels ; and

(d) what is the tax burden in each State, including local levies on Hotel industry ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) In the Finance Bill 1994, the Finance Minister has proposed reduction in the rate of Expenditure Tax on the chargeable expenditure incurred in a hotel where the room charges per unit of residential accommodation is rupees 1200 or more per day, per individual from 20% at present to 10%. The proposed reduction will take effect from 1-6-94 and will apply in relation to assessment year 1994-95 and subsequent years.

(d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Proposals for takings over of airports by NAA

3898. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the conditions/norms laid down for taking over of management of an Airport by the National Airports Authority ;

(b) whether the National Airports Authority has received any proposals from different State Governments for taking over of some more Airports ;

(c) if so, the names of Airports, particularly in Gujarat and Maharashtra, in respect of which such proposals have been considered/received during 1993-94 so far ; and

(d) what is the present position in regard to each of these proposals ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) The main conditions/norms for taking over the management of an airport by the National Airports Authority (NAA) are ; the economic viability of operation and financial health of NAA.

(b) to (d) proposals were received from the Government of Gujarat for taking over of Surat airfield and from the Government of Maharashtra for taking over of Nanded aerodrome by NAA. Due to paucity of resources and the fact that these airports are economically unviable, it was decided that NAA would not be able to take over these airports.

भारत और दक्षिण अफ्रिका के बीच पर्यटन का विकास

3899. श्रीमती चन्द्रिका अभिनन्दन जैन : क्या नागर विमानन और पर्यटन मंत्री 17 मार्च, 1994 को राज्य सभा में अतारांकित प्रश्न 3079 के दिये गये उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) पर्यटन स्थलों और विभिन्न शहरों में स्थित ऐतिहासिक स्थलों का दौरा करने हेतु दक्षिण अफ्रीका से प्रति वर्ष कितने पर्यटकों के हमारे देश में आने की संभावना है और प्रति वर्ष कितने भारतीय पर्यटकों के इस प्रयोजन हेतु दक्षिण अफ्रीका जाने की संभावना है ;

(ख) दोनों देशों के बीच पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने हेतु क्या कदम उठाए जाएंगे/उठाए जाने का विचार है और क्या इस संबंध में दोनों देशों के बीच किसी समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए हैं; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ?

नागर विमानन और पर्यटन मंत्री (श्री गुलाम नबी आजाद) : (क) वर्ष 1993 के दौरान भारत की यात्रा पर आए दक्षिण अफ्रीका के पर्यटकों की संख्या 9,914 थी । दक्षिण अफ्रीका जाने वाले भारतीय पर्यटकों के आंकड़े उपलब्ध नहीं है ।

(ख) और (ग) दोनों देशों के बीच पर्यटक यातायात को संवर्धन करने के लिए एअर इंडिया ने 2 अक्तूबर, 1993 से दक्षिण अफ्रीका के लिए अपनी उड़ान प्रारंभ कर दी है और एक औपचारिक वायु सेवा करार को अन्तिम रूप दिया जा रहा है ।

Under cutting of fares by air taxi services

3900. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the air taxi services have been engaging in acute under cutting of fares, to the detriment of IA ;

(b) if so, the details of the under cutting of fares effected by private airlines ; and

(c) Governments reaction to prevent such unfair practices ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) There is no restriction on fares to be charged by Air Taxi operators. Air taxi operators are free to fix fares in their best commercial judgement.

Recruitment to various posts under the Department of Civil Aviation

3901. DR. SANJAYA SINH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that various organisations under the Department of Civil Aviation are recruiting people from outside to various posts to fill up vacancies, in contravention of the Ministry's Order dated the 22nd November, 1993 ;